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ABSTRACT

Schools can help young people be aware of the social, political, and economic consequences of an aging society. This report is part of a six-part series, "Schools in an Aging Society," designed to promote education for, with, and about older adults. The Advanced Generations' Education through the Schools (AGES) is a planning model in Connecticut that promotes awareness of older adults through staff development, intergenerational exchange projects, curricular activities, curriculums on aging, and other activities. Eight steps are involved in designing an AGES program at either a systemwide or schoolwide level: (1) project initiator discusses the model with administrators; (2) staff and community members meet with project initiator for introduction and creation of planning committee; (3) existing programs are assessed; (4) planning committee reviews readiness and sets priorities; (5) plans are implemented; (6) the program is evaluated; (7) the projects are publicized; and (8) an annual review is conducted. Interest in the AGES program can be generated among students, teachers, parents, and older adults by addressing groups and meetings or working through governmental agencies. Appendices include a brief description of a systemwide ACES program, a brief description of how school-based AGES program was developed, professional development suggestions, and a list of national and state resources. (JPT)

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# STRENGTHENING THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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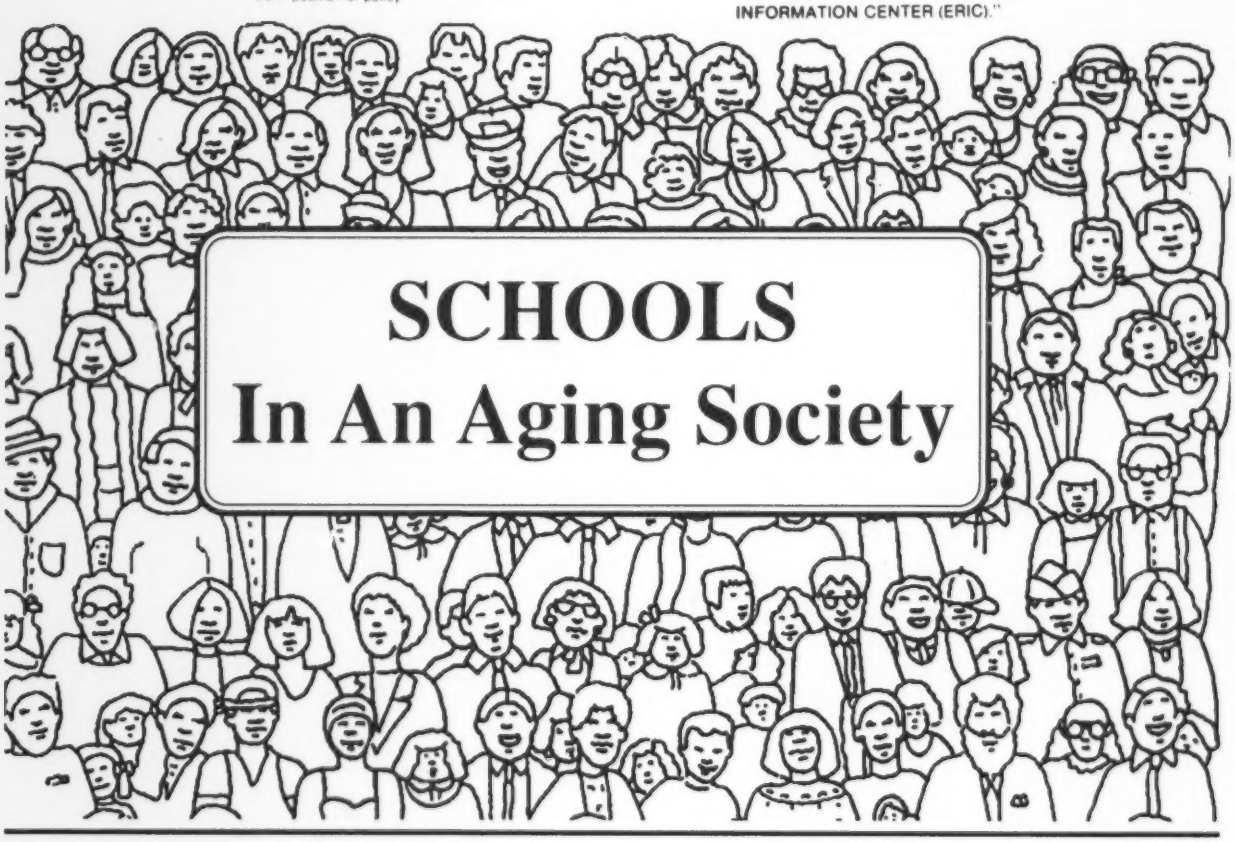

## SCHOOLS In An Aging Society

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# Schools In An Aging Society: STRENGTHENING THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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## PREFACE

Young people need to be aware of the social, political and economic consequences of an aging society. Schools can prepare students with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to participate in this changing world. The intent of the series *Schools in an Aging Society* is to promote education for, with and about older adults. It consists of six interrelated guides.

*Strengthening the School-Community Connection* shows how schools can be more responsive to the larger community. It is especially beneficial in areas where an increasing proportion of residents are older and have no school-age children. The guide is designed for school administrators, volunteer coordinators, staff developers, and members of local boards of education who seek creative uses of community resources and want to increase intergenerational cooperation. It describes in detail AGES (Advancing Generations' Education through the Schools), a planning model that promotes awareness of older adults through staff development, intergenerational exchange projects, curricular activities, curriculums on aging, and classroom and extracurricular activities. Eight steps are followed in designing an AGES program at either a systemwide or individual school level. Issues such as recruitment, follow-up, and continuity of projects are addressed. The program benefits students, teachers and older residents with minimal resource commitments from any one group.

As the fastest-growing segment of society, older adults can be valuable resources for schools. *Elders as Resources* develops a rationale for intergenerational programs that address the educational and social needs of younger and older persons. Older adults can offer their expertise and experiences to enrich educational programs, as well as satisfy their own needs for meaningful social roles. Younger persons benefit from older persons who serve as positive role models and mentors. *Elders as Resources* suggests seven intergenerational models for classroom teachers. Practical suggestions are given for planning intergenerational programs, facilitating intergenerational discussions and conducting oral history interviews.

The challenges for our society require educators to confront stereotypic images of older adults and to present an accurate and balanced view of aging. Three *Classroom Activities* guides in this series consist of lesson plans for secondary teachers of health and home economics, language arts, and social studies. The suggested activities are designed to address existing curricular objectives and require minimal preparation time. Although learning activities are separated by discipline, teachers are encouraged to use information in other content areas. Since aging is an interdisciplinary subject, many activities would be appropriate in several subjects as well as for promoting interdisciplinary instruction. The activities are intended to help students develop healthy attitudes toward their own aging, realize the lifelong importance of decisions they make as young adults, and understand the interdependence of all age groups.

Finally, a *Guide for Pupil Personnel Specialists* provides age-related information on the changing family and workplace. It is appropriate for school counselors, psychologists and social workers. Changes in family structure, such as fewer children and more older persons, mean that students have different family experiences and needs than young people of past generations. An increasing number of young people are

(continued)

in homes where primary care is provided to their grandparents. Also, a growing number of children are under the primary care of their grandparents. Additionally, career opportunities and the workplace are affected by the aging society. School counselors are in a unique position to help young people by working with students individually, in the classroom, with families, and through school-community programs.

Schools and community organizations can act as catalysts for promoting a supportive social and economic environment for successful aging. The benefits extend to future generations of older people.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Laura Donorfio, project assistant, contributed in countless ways to the development of these materials, including researching topics, typing, reviewing, editing and organizing material.

David Shuldiner, humanities program coordinator for the Connecticut State Department on Aging, was the lead author of the guide, *Elders as Resources*. He worked closely with educators and social service agencies to provide intergenerational program recommendations.

Mark A. Edinberg, originator of AGES (Advancing Generations' Education through Schools), was the lead author of *Strengthening the School-Community Connection.* He worked closely with schools that have implemented the AGES planning model.

The ideas found in the discipline guides of *Schools in an Aging Society* come from many individuals whose contributions may not be acknowledged here, but whose efforts are greatly appreciated. Numerous ideas were generated from outstanding educators participating in Connecticut's Institute for Teaching and Learning over the past four years. The following educators served in advisory capacities and provided background information, classroom suggestions and organizational ideas for the *Classroom Activities* guides.

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Daniel W. Gregg, Consultant in Social Studies
Connecticut State Department of Education

# AGES MODEL

Advancing Generations' Education through Schools (AGES) is an organizational planning model for developing school programs related to aging. The model provides an administrative structure that strengthens a school's connections with older residents. The goal of AGES is to promote education about, for and with older adults.

## Background and Need

Older adults comprise the fastest-growing segment of society. Along with health, social and financial needs, there is increased recognition that older adults need to remain intellectually stimulated and socially connected. Older people are affected by how younger generations perceive their needs, just as young people are affected by how older adults view them.

Educators increasingly realize the interdependence of generations and the need to promote understanding among all age groups. For example, many communities grapple with the proportional shrinking of the school-age population, while the school budget remains a large item in municipal expenditures. In some communities, individuals may view other age groups as competitors for resources. In addition to dealing with this perceived competition, most schools try to respond to societal changes such as substance abuse, latchkey children, and the unavailability of adults to participate in voluntary school-related programs. Many older community residents simply do not understand the educational needs of students today and the increased expectations of society on schools.

One positive response to these trends is the development of school programs involving older adults. Such programs include school volunteers, oral history projects and intergenerational instruction. Most programs, however, focus on one topic or age group in a school. They generally come and go depending on the interest and time a teacher has available to devote to programs that extend to older residents. Few schools have a systematic process to maximize involvement of older adults in a variety of roles, subjects and grade levels.

The AGES model provides a planning process and structure for developing intergenerational and aging-related school activities. The AGES model benefits both young people in schools and older people in the community. The model, which is spelled out in the chart "Benefits of an AGES Program" (below), can be used either on a systemwide or individual school basis. This guide explains how schools can develop AGES programs which best fit a unique set of needs, interests and resources.

**BENEFITS OF AN AGES PROGRAM**

**For Young People**
- Learn about aging
- Learn valuable skills and knowledge
- Have purposeful exchanges with older adults
- Promote positive self-esteem

**For Older Adults**
- Enjoy learning opportunities
- Have meaningful social activities and roles
- Have purposeful exchanges with young students
- Promote positive self-esteem

**For the School and Community**
- Promote school goals
- Promote a sense of community/interdependence
- Combine school and community resources

## AGES Project Ideas

The AGES model includes ongoing activities such as tutoring and mentoring projects, and time-bound activities such as special curricular and extracurricular events. Examples of project ideas are presented in the following six categories.

**Staff development**

- Attitudes about aging
- Facts on aging: What teachers should know
- Planning intergenerational activities
- Caring for aging relatives
- Awareness of age-related issues (biological, economic, political)

**Intergenerational exchange**

- Pen pals
- Community forums
- Oral history projects
- Family history

**Curricular activities**

- Reading poetry
- Tutors
- Mentors for youths at risk
- Reading to younger students

**Curriculum on aging**

- Aging in literature and art
- Historical and cultural views of older adults
- Normal aging processes
- Political, economic and social issues of aging

**Classroom activities**

- Room grandparents
- Discussion groups
- Guest presenters

**Extracurricular activities**

- Community service
- Special persons' day
- Luncheon for seniors
- Chore services
- Intergenerational environmental trips or projects
- Audiences for performances
- Eagle Scout projects

The AGES planning model allows schools to develop multiple projects. The philosophical guidelines (below) and eight-step model on page 4 will allow schools to create one umbrella organizational structure from which school and community projects can be developed.

**Philosophical Guidelines**

The AGES model is based on the following philosophical guidelines.

- Individuals are invited, rather than mandated, to participate.
- Projects are related to existing school and curricular goals.
- Project implementation puts quality ahead of quantity.
- Projects are designed to be ongoing, without requiring extensive administrative resources.
- Projects are designed to maximize benefits for both young students and older adults.

These guidelines encourage teachers and community members to take ownership of AGES projects by inviting, rather than mandating participation. They can promote a psychological sense of community – a sense of cooperation and interdependence among community groups. They assure teachers, administrators and parents that the intent of AGES projects is to serve existing educational goals – not to add curriculum. The model provides a structure for developing creative ideas into successful learning activities.

## Comparing Systemwide and School-Based Programs

The AGES planning model can be adopted systemwide or by one school within a system. Both levels of involvement have practical advantages and disadvantages.

A systemwide AGES model offers several advantages. A systemwide planning committee suggests a commitment from the school district to develop aging-related projects. Publicity is more easily organized from a central planning committee. Inquiries from the community can be directed through a central clearinghouse, thereby decreasing confusion about how to become involved in AGES projects. Different types of projects still can be developed in various schools that meet individual school needs. In order for a systemwide program to work, however, a strong commitment is necessary from the superintendent and top administrators. An AGES coordinator needs to be aware of potential political issues that may exist among various community organizations and individuals.

In some cases, committee formation and operations may be politicized. Another potential drawback to a systemwide program is that ideas brought to the planning committee may not reach the classroom level. For these reasons, educators may choose to develop an AGES program within a single school.

Developing aging and intergenerational projects at the individual school level also has certain advantages. Projects can be developed and implemented quickly and community residents can associate easily with an AGES program within a familiar, local school. An interested principal or group of teachers can have immediate impact in their place of work.

At the same time, staff members are more limited in the time they can devote to planning, recruiting participants and publicizing projects for school-based programs. It may be difficult for individual schools to maintain AGES programs over several years due to time constraints. Additionally, without endorsement at the higher administrative level, individual schools may be limited in the kinds of AGES projects they are able to adopt.

## DEVELOPING AN AGES PROGRAM: EIGHT STEPS

The eight steps recommended in developing AGES projects are explained fully in this section. Schools will need to adjust the process to accommodate specific needs and circumstances. The process should include the following steps:

- **Entry**. A project initiator discusses the model with the superintendent for a systemwide program, or with the principal for a school-based program. The superintendent may request that the ideas be presented to the local board of education.
- **Initial meeting(s)**. A project initiator explains the AGES model to key staff members of school and community organizations and identifies planning committee representatives and an AGES coordinator.
- **Readiness assessment**. Existing age-related projects and new projects in which staff members are interested are identified under the direction of a district or building administrator. Key individuals are surveyed.
- **Planning committee**. A planning committee meeting is convened by the chairperson to review data from the readiness assessment and to determine priorities.
- **Implementation**. The committee designates individuals to plan and implement each project.
- **Evaluation**. The committee assesses the program in terms of numbers of persons participating and the outcomes of individual projects.
- **Publicity**. The committee publicizes each project through news releases and other efforts.
- **Annual review**. The planning committee meets to discuss the successes and failures of projects and to determine priorities for the next school year.

### Entry

Entry is how one begins to involve others in planning for an AGES program. It is important to identify key people who need to be informed about both the content and time line of the program. Contacts normally come in the following sequence:

- Superintendent of schools for systemwide program; principal for school-based program. For systemwide programs, the superintendent needs to approve the program concept, but does not have to be involved in planning and implementation. For school-based programs, the principal must be comfortable and involved with the project, but does not have to chair the planning committee. The superintendent or principal may designate a representative.
- Representative from board of education, especially for systemwide programs. The school board needs to be aware of the program model and purpose.
- Teachers, the adult education director and administrators may serve on the committee. The person chosen to chair the planning committee can identify key staff members with whom initial plans should be discussed.
- Staff members of relevant community organizations serving older adults, such as senior center directors and human services staff members, should be included in the beginning stages.
- Representatives from parent-teacher organizations may provide useful input and support.

**Initial Meeting(s)**

The developer of the AGES program should be prepared to explain goals, objectives and past and potential projects during an initial meeting with school administrators. People who attend the initial meeting should not be asked to be on the planning committee, although if interested, they can join. The superintendent usually knows who needs to be informed initially and can guide the program developer on who and how to invite people to the meeting. For systemwide programs, this meeting may be the only direct contact some will have with the AGES program. For school-based programs, the initial group meeting is likely to constitute the planning committee.

**Readiness Assessment**

Background information is needed before the first planning committee meeting is scheduled. A survey of key individuals will identify existing age-related projects and new projects in which staff members are interested. Projects may be ongoing, such as intergenerational tutoring programs, or single events, e.g., Grandparents' Day. It is necessary to decide in advance who will compile results of survey inquiries. An overview of the goals, benefits and philosophical guidelines of AGES, which can be used to guide responses to questions staff members may have during this assessment phase, should be available. The following assessment methods suggest systematic ways of collecting information on existing projects, and on teacher interest in new projects.

**Assessing existing projects.** Schools frequently have a history of intergenerational projects. One way to identify past and present projects is to inquire about these efforts during the initial meeting. This less formal method of inquiry is sufficient for school-based programs. For systemwide programs, a more formal assessment consisting of 15-minute interviews with principals, key teachers and community individuals can be used. In order to encourage principals to set aside interview time, the superintendent might send them a memo explaining that they will be contacted to arrange a meeting. The assessment interview should be brief and direct. For future comparison purposes and program evaluation, the interview questions should include information on the numbers of people involved in past intergenerational or aging-related activities (see sample AGES Assessment Form on page 6). The interview time also gives principals an opportunity to ask questions and express concerns. The interviewer, therefore, should be prepared to acquaint principals with the program objectives and to address all questions and concerns.

## AGES ASSESSMENT FORM

**School** _____ **Interviewer** _____

**Principal** _____ **Date** _____

| **What kinds of activities about, for and with older adults has your school held?** | **Approximate Number Involved** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Students** | **Older Adults** |
| A. Ongoing classroom | | |
| ___tutors | ____ | ____ |
| ___volunteer teaching assistants | ____ | ____ |
| ___mentor | ____ | ____ |
| ___adopt a student | ____ | ____ |
| ___other_____ | ____ | ____ |
| B. Intergenerational Exchange | | |
| ___special persons' day (Grandparents' Day) | ____ | ____ |
| ___audience for performance | ____ | ____ |
| ___oral history | ____ | ____ |
| ___other_____ | ____ | ____ |
| C. Curriculum on Aging | | |
| ___course_____ | ____ | ____ |
| ___units on aging_____ | ____ | ____ |
| ___topics on aging_____ | ____ | ____ |
| ___other_____ | ____ | ____ |
| D. Extracurricular activities | | |
| ___PTA_____ | ____ | ____ |
| ___service programs_____ | ____ | ____ |
| ___school clubs_____ | ____ | ____ |
| ___other_____ | ____ | ____ |
| E. Older Adults' Needs | | |
| ___adult education_____ | ____ | ____ |
| ___other_____ | ____ | ____ |

Which current programs should be expanded?

Ideas for new or innovative programs

**Assessing teacher interest.** Some teachers will have initial interest in aging-related projects, while others will not. Teacher interest must be assessed in a way that encourages involvement without discouraging or stigmatizing those who do not choose to participate. Others may participate at a later date when momentum for the AGES program is developed. A sample teacher interest and needs form is shown below.

## AGES Teacher Interest and Needs Form

Name_____ Area/Grade Taught _____

Date _____ School _____

_____ Yes. I am interested in having older adults involved in my classroom.
- _____ regularly
- _____ occasionally

_____ No. I am not interested.

_____ Maybe. I need more information about the program.

Specific Needs: I would be interested in having older persons help in the following way(s):

- _____ reading partners_____
- _____ tutors: subject_____
- _____ volunteer teaching assistants _____
- _____ mentors_____
- _____ interviewees for oral history projects_____
- _____ audience for performance _____
- _____ demonstrators: crafts/skills _____
- _____ guest speakers: topic _____
- _____ other _____

Additional comments, suggestions or questions

## Planning Committee

The AGES planning committee sets priorities and assists in school-community linkages. The planning committee works under predetermined deadlines by facilitating project development, but is not directly responsible for project implementation.

**Why have a planning committee?** Developing one or several projects through a planning committee from within a school's structure has several advantages. Projects are viewed as integral parts of the school, not as unique, unrelated class activities. More people can contribute to a project, thus reducing the time commitment for individuals acting independently. Persons wanting to contribute or develop projects have a contact point. If there are staffing changes, the committee can continue as an entity.

**Who should serve on a planning committee?** Committee membership is open to individuals wishing to contribute. Since the committee is primarily a planning group, it can function with up to 12 or 15 members. School-based committees will be smaller.

The planning committee should include administrators and teachers from the school, parent representative(s) from the parent-teacher organization, student representative(s), and representatives from agencies serving older adults. Teachers serving on the committee ideally should be those who have developed intergenerational programs or aging-related curriculums. Parent representatives may provide easier access to the parent organization, which may want to assist in specific projects. Community agency representatives may be from senior centers, human service agencies, nursing homes, organizations of retired professionals, or other groups serving older people.

For systemwide programs, an invitation should be extended to at least one school board member. All building principals should be invited, realizing that they will not all have the time to participate. Secondary, middle and elementary schools should be represented by at least one teacher and/or administrator.

**What committee functions and roles are needed?** Key persons on the committee should be identified to fulfill certain organizational roles and functions. The following roles may be filled by teachers, administrators, parents or outside consultants.

- *Convener* – makes initial contacts, meets with staff members to explain the program, and identifies people to form an AGES planning committee.
- *Committee chairperson* – facilitates planning committee meetings and makes certain that notes of the meetings are sent to participants. The head of the planning committee should be chosen on the basis of position, leadership skills and interest in AGES programming.
- *Public relations person* – handles interactions with newspapers and other media, develops brochures about the various projects and assists in recruiting volunteers. If an individual is not available to handle public relations, participating teachers should be encouraged to publicize their own projects. In this case, teachers can be given publicity procedures and the names of local media contact persons.
- *Coordinator* – responsible for monitoring and assisting project implementation, when necessary.
- *Evaluator* – obtains assessment information for the planning meeting and helps the committee evaluate the accomplishments of projects at the end of the school year. Time and availability of personnel will determine how extensive the program evaluation will be.
- *Volunteer coordinator* – must be familiar with older persons in the community and

know key persons in agencies serving older adults. If no volunteer coordinator exists in a school, a PTA member may perform the role, providing an important link between older adults and school staff members.

Consideration must be given to positions, talents and interests of committee members. Although one individual may fulfill two or more roles, the responsibilities of the AGES program should involve as many persons as possible. The AGES program should not be associated with any one person; many should take ownership.

**What does the committee do?** During the initial meeting, the committee reviews information from the assessment survey, brainstorms project ideas and identifies projects to develop. At the end of the meeting, there should be an attempt to identify the individual(s) who will work on each project. The initial planning meeting can be held at the end of the school year in preparation for the upcoming year, or at the beginning of the new school year.

Subsequent meetings should be held at two- or three-month intervals to review progress. The final meeting is held at the end of the school year to evaluate projects and to identify the new year's program objectives.

Planning meetings should be held at the end of a school day and should last no longer than 90 minutes. Notes on the meetings should be kept and circulated among participants. The planning committee should commit itself to what is realistic and feasible.

**What should the committee consider?** The number and scope of new projects initially should be small in order to work out problems. For example, in one community, a pen pal project started the first year with 120 students in the fourth and fifth grades. Students wrote to nursing home residents and adult day-care clients. The project was more manageable the following year when it was limited to 60 students from one grade.

When developing specific projects, care should be used in considering available resources and time constraints. Projects that can be ongoing without extensive future administrative support should be selected. Projects that are related to curricular goals are more likely to receive support from teachers and administrators.

Any use of school resources for older adults can have hidden costs. This should be considered before starting a program. For example, issues such as insurance liability need to be addressed in advance. Usually, there are school policies about volunteers and PTA/PTO activities that also may apply to AGES projects.

**Implementation**

After the initial planning committee meeting, or when specific projects are identified, individuals should be selected to develop and implement each project. Work groups then develop the procedures to implement specific projects. These groups will consist of persons who may or may not serve on the planning committee. Usually, one person takes primary responsibility for implementing new projects.

New projects should be piloted on a small scale. After working out the logistical arrangements in the pilot effort, projects can be expanded to include larger numbers of students and older adults. Long-range success can be ensured by making initial expectations and commitments that are achievable.

There is always a high level of excitement as projects begin. Often the projects provide new experiences and increase awareness for students and older adults. Time should be allowed for students and older adults to talk about what they saw, felt and learned. This debriefing provides feedback to project developers and is an opportunity to address any misunderstandings or problems.

All staff members, including the support staff, should be informed about the projects. Clerical and support staff members need to have information and

some understanding of the purpose and nature of project activities so they can be good hosts when older adults visit the school.

**Evaluation**

A formal evaluation provides useful qualitative and quantitative information for reports to the planning committee, parent-teacher organization, school board and media. Information from evaluations can be used in many ways, such as a bulletin board display, a newspaper article or a presentation to the board of education. The AGES coordinator and/or evaluator should assess progress by meeting regularly with persons involved in each project.

The final evaluation process does not have to be elaborate, but should include the students, staff, parents and older adults involved in each project. Anecdotal information should be used for illustrative purposes. Reactions from students and older adults to AGES projects should be logged. The AGES evaluation form shown on page 11 is one program evaluation tool.

**Publicity**

A good project is enhanced by effective publicity and dissemination. Publicity encourages further participation and promotes a sense of community involvement. It recognizes the positive contributions of teachers, students and older adults.

The following suggestions will help in local publicity efforts.

- Reporters want interesting stories. Sell your program to the reporter, showing how and why it should be featured in the paper.
- Learn the identity of reporters who cover programs in schools and senior organizations. Call the reporter each time you have a story idea that you believe will meet the newspaper's criteria for coverage.
- Try to find unusual human interest stories. For example, a local newspaper might like a story about an older person who attended a school as a young person and is now serving as a volunteer.
- News releases (stories offered to the news media by a person or organization) should be sent to the news organization's assignment editor, rather than to an individual reporter.
- Many AGES project activities provide interesting photo opportunities. Suggest to reporters possible photographs to include with the article.
- When an article highlighting your students or program is published, write a letter to the editor to let everyone know that the effort of the newspaper or individual reporter or photographer was appreciated.

**Annual Review**

The yearly review serves several purposes. It is a time for the planning committee, teachers, administrators and school board members to gain perspective on what has or has not been accomplished by the AGES program. It allows the committee to think about the big picture, including areas to be developed in future years.

The annual review also is an opportunity to formally recognize persons for their involvement. Thank-you notes, recognition meetings and receptions can be used to acknowledge staff members, students and volunteers who participated in AGES projects. While participation may be its own reward, formal recognition is appreciated and encourages involvement.

## AGES EVALUATION FORM

**Date**_____ **School** _____

**AGES Activity**_____

**Check One:** I am a(n)

Student in grade _____
Teacher of grade/subject _____
Parent (student's grade) _____
Older adult _____
Other_____

1. To me, the activity was:

   _____ Very interesting
   _____ Interesting
   _____ Not interesting

2. What I liked best about this activity was:

3. What I liked least about this activity was:

4. As a result of this AGES activity, I learned:

   _____ A lot
   _____ A little
   _____ Nothing

5. What I learned from this activity was:

6. What I think could be changed in this activity is:

Comments:

## Questions and Concerns

All new programs face initial resistance. Persons will raise legitimate questions and concerns that will need to be addressed. Expressions of concern should be encouraged during both informal contacts and formal planning meetings. The following concerns are voiced frequently.

**Will this violate teachers' contracts (and take away jobs)?** The answer is an emphatic "no!" Teachers may use older adults in a variety of ways to enhance instruction. No AGES project should infringe on the classroom teacher's responsibilities.

**We already tried this and it did not work.** Not all projects are successful. After determining what was done and why it did not work, the group should focus on how the new AGES program differs in approach and how successful projects can be developed.

**We already do this.** This concern reflects several issues. Individuals already may have an investment in existing projects and have concerns about time constraints and loss of control. While many projects exist by themselves and may continue to do so, the AGES planning committee will help to promote them and give organizational structure to what is already in place, rather than replace or replicate them. The organizational structure of AGES strengthens existing projects, as well as helping to develop other types of projects.

**Teachers are overburdened and do not have time.** It should be pointed out that participation is voluntary. Efficient use of the planning committee reduces time individual teachers need to give to identifying resource persons and materials for classroom projects.

**Old people do not work well in classrooms.** Successful programs in other schools and communities can be discussed. See page 14 for suggestions on how to screen and recruit adults.

**I do not have time to attend more committee meetings.** The initial group meets only once. Planning committee meetings make efficient use of time by using small work groups for individual projects.

**Why are you doing this?** The benefits and rewards most people find in AGES projects can be shared (see benefits on page 1).

**Do I now have to get the approval of the planning committee for an intergenerational program?** The AGES planning committee does not prevent teachers from creating their own projects. Some age-related projects may function independently of the committee. The committee is available, however, to enhance and support projects for interested teachers.

## Generating Interest

Specific activities and approaches designed to generate interest among parents, students and teachers include the following.

### Parent involvement

- Make a formal announcement at PTA meetings about the program.
- Encourage schools to appoint a representative to the planning committee.
- Through school newsletters, invite the participation of parents who may have interest in or knowledge of nursing homes or agencies serving older adults.
- Keep a file with all verbal and written inquiries and community contacts.

### Student involvement

- Involve student organizations. Many have goals compatible with service to older adults.
- Other special interest organizations may want to collaborate with similar older adult groups, such as outdoor, chess, computer or foreign language clubs.

**Teacher involvement**

- Present the philosophical guidelines, emphasizing voluntary participation.
- Discuss during a faculty meeting potential ideas that might be worked on by the planning committee.
- Encourage teachers to develop their own projects, and invite them to interact with or join the planning committee
- Existing projects may be enhanced with new ideas and points of view.

**Identifying Older Adults In Your Community**

Community and religious groups that are not made up solely of older people are good referral sources. The best referrals often come from involved older adults who can identify, recommend and recruit their peers. Within every community, individuals representing agencies that serve older adults may be interested in promoting school-community linkages. The list of organizations that follows suggests area contact persons. (See Appendix D for additional information on national and state organizations.)

**State departments on aging.** Each state has an agency on aging. Employees working in the field of community services can direct AGES developers to local resources and contact persons.

**State departments of education.** Some states may have persons responsible for promoting programs involving older adults as tutors and teacher aides in the schools. Individuals within state departments of education may be aware of school districts that have developed projects related to aging.

**Area agencies on aging.** Each state is divided into regions represented by area agencies on aging that coordinate services to older adults. A staff member from the area agency serving your community might be invited to talk about elder programs in your area and possible connections with school programs. State departments on aging, senior center directors and local home service directors can provide the telephone number for area agencies on aging.

**Senior centers.** Local senior center directors oversee recreational and nutritional services for older adults and can provide information about the older adults at their center and the types of programs offered.

**Nursing homes.** Names and locations of local nursing homes can be accessed through the Yellow Pages of the telephone book. Key personnel are the administrator of the facility, the head of social services, and the head of recreation activities. At some facilities, social services staff members take responsibility for intergenerational programs. At others, recreation staff members are in charge of these activities.

**Housing facilities.** Retirement homes, life-care facilities and elderly housing provide living arrangements for independent older adults. Many have tenant organizations that can be used for program development. Agency on aging staff members and senior center directors can help to identify elder housing closest to an inquiring school.

**Adult day centers.** Adult day programs are designed for older adults living in the community who need supervision during the day. Program hours frequently overlap with the school day. Senior center directors and staff members at area agencies on aging can assist in making contacts with these organizations.

**Municipal agents.** Each municipality in Connecticut has a person identified as a *municipal agent*, who provides information about benefits and programs for older residents. The designated *municipal agent* may be a full-time commissioner on aging or a part-time appointee. The town or city clerk will know who the municipal agent is. The agent may be able to provide access to older adults not available through other contact persons.

**American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).** Local chapters of AARP may have persons interested in AGES projects. AARP includes the

National Association of Retired Teachers. Senior center directors usually can identify local chapters and their key contact persons.

**Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).** This nationwide network of organizations links retirement-aged people with community organizations seeking assistance. They are listed in the white telephone book pages in communities which have RSVPs. Area agencies on aging should have information on which communities have local RSVPs.

### Recruiting and Screening Older Adults

Volunteer recruitment is generally a slow process. After numerous contacts through brochures, public talks, informal conversations and news articles, schools will find a small core group of older adults willing to participate in specific projects. Many older adults have not been in schools for years. They may feel they have little to offer students, since they grew up during a time when most persons did not finish high school. Some believe that the schools are not interested in having them become personally involved. They may feel that neither they nor the students would benefit from their involvement. Recruitment efforts need to address these concerns.

Obstacles to AGES project development include common concerns and misconceptions about involving older adults. Will older adults be mentally capable of handling school involvement? How will they react to the school atmosphere? How can we ensure a good match between the needs of teachers and older adults? How can we monitor older adult volunteers? Will they respect confidentiality issues which may arise in classroom work? These kinds of concerns usually can be addressed through recruitment guidelines.

The principal or volunteer coordinator needs to talk with older adults individually to identify their interests and abilities. An initial visit and tour should be encouraged, without any other obligation attached. An attempt should be made to match older adults with the project for which they would best be suited. The age group of students and the nature of the involvement of people should be considered.

### Schools as a Resource for Older Adults

There are several reasons for making selected school resources available to older adults. As taxpayers, older adults contribute a large percentage of their municipal tax dollars to school activities. Some are asking what is the return for this steadily increasing cost. By viewing schools as resources, older adults may be more receptive to participating in school activities and may be more understanding of educational expenses.

At one time, public schools served the educational needs of immigrants of all ages who were socialized to a new culture through language and social studies instruction. Today, schools address educational needs of older adults, primarily through adult education programs. Other school programs, however, could include older adults. Our rapidly changing society has led to the need for new information and skills which all citizens need to understand, such as health education, environmental awareness and computer literacy.

School resources can be made available to older adults in a number of ways. School buildings have times when they are underutilized. Groups of older adults could use schools for meetings or programs. Some adult education programs held in schools could connect with regular student instruction and be presented as part of AGES projects. Schools may serve as sites for community club meetings, concerts and political forums. Invitations could be extended to groups of students in social studies classes and music clubs, and to older adults through AARP chapters and senior centers.

As older adults become involved in educational activities, they can serve as role models of successful aging, combatting stereotypes and the problems of isolation that older people so often experience. Everyone stands to gain – educators, students and older adults.

## APPENDIX A
## A Systemwide AGES Program

The following is a brief description of how the AGES model was developed on a systemwide basis in Fairfield, Connecticut.

The concepts for developing an AGES program began in the spring of 1989 in response to initial interest to form an intergenerational school program. Mark Edinberg, developer of the AGES model and former director of the Center for the Study of Aging at the University of Bridgeport, met initially with the superintendent of schools, who agreed to help form a planning committee that would be chaired by the district coordinator for adult and continuing education.

Grants from the Fairfield County Cooperative Foundation and Physicians' Health Services provided a total of $15,000 for the first year. The co-president of the Parent Teacher Association took a part-time AGES staff position to coordinate the program. During the second year, the AGES program was supported with $18,000 from the original funders. During the third year, the school set aside $6,000 for administrative time to coordinate AGES.

The initial planning committee consisted of an assistant superintendent, a member of the Board of Education, the coordinator for professional development, a high school home economics teacher, the head of the town's Department of Human Services, a member of the Human Services Commission, a PTA representative, the head of the guidance program, a headmaster from the high school, and two principals, representing elementary and middle schools. All principals were invited to participate; those who agreed to meet were made committee members.

Each principal then was surveyed by the two staff persons for the project to find out what types of aging-related projects currently existed in the Fairfield schools. The survey was conducted in May and early June 1989. The planning committee met two weeks later, at which time members brainstormed project ideas for the next year. Over the summer, Edinberg developed outlines of possible steps for each project. The committee met in the fall to review the outlines and select priority projects for the following year.

Between two and four persons were assigned to each of the following projects to develop implementation plans.

**Pen pals.** Approximately 120 fourth and fifth graders each had a pen pal who was a local nursing home resident, adult day care client or community resident. Letters were exchanged on a regular basis throughout the school year as teachers integrated the letters with the social studies and writing curriculums. Many students visited their pen pals, forming closer relationships with older persons, several of whom did not have regular contact with younger people. In the second year, the project was limited to 60 fourth graders in the interest of effective management.

**Adopt a nursing home.** A local nursing home was contacted by an elementary school. This led to some individual visits and to students who did not have grandparents in the area adopting these friends as "grandparents."

**PTA outreach.** Principals surveyed their faculties to find out how they might use older adults in their classrooms. Over 25 percent of all teachers had specific requests. Each school now has a PTA AGES coordinator who puts the teacher requests into a home flier that goes to all students in the school. During the first year, 10 of 12 schools had a minimum of two additional older adults as volunteers. By the second year, 30 volunteers were working in schools. The goal was to have 100 volunteers by the end of the third year.

**Room grandparents.** Several elementary schools requested older adults to work with room mothers. During the second year, there were five room grandparents, some of whom were recruited through PTA outreach.

**In-service training.** Teachers attended an in-service seminar on intergenerational communication. In-service training was held for secretarial and support staff members on communication skills with older community residents.

**Performance invitations.** All announcements of school concerts and performances are sent

to the senior center director, who publicizes them regularly in senior center newsletters.

**High school initiative.** The PTA outreach project resulted in six new volunteers at the high school who are engaged in activities ranging from tutoring students of English as a second language (ESL) to teaching the art of reading poetry. The student council invited elected officials and committee chairpersons at the senior center to a luncheon to introduce them to Fairfield High School. As part of a home economics class, students had an older adult "shadow" them for a day.

**Summer seminars for seniors.** The Fairfield Education Association surveyed teachers, asking them to express interest in offering one- or two-session seminars at the Fairfield Senior Center during the summer. Teachers received continuing education credit in conjunction with this activity. Eight teachers taught separate seminars on topics such as whale watching and developing capable children. Central office staff members continued to offer monthly seminars throughout the 1990-1991 academic year.

**Support for retired teachers.** As part of the Fairfield Education Association, a group of newly retired teachers met to explore ways to offer support to long-term retirees and to maintain meaningful connections with the school.

**Curriculum development.** The Health and Social Studies departments explored ways of incorporating aging topics into their curricular areas.

**Magic Me.** The Junior League worked with one elementary school to pilot test "Magic Me," an eight-session project in which a group of students spends time at a nursing home with structured experiences. In 1991, three elementary schools participated in this project.

**Promotional activities.** In addition to the above projects, a logo for the AGES Program was designed for use on correspondence and buttons. A general brochure describing the AGES model and the range of related projects also was designed (see pages 17 and 18). An AGES newsletter was developed during the second year. The first edition highlighted projects and volunteers and served as a recruitment vehicle for the upcoming year. The slogan developed for recruitment was "We haven't seen you in AGES."

The focus for future years is on maintaining current programs and increasing the number of older adults involved in schools. Specific planning committee members are responsible for areas such as publicity, volunteer coordination and the newsletter. Volunteer coordination may become a role of the PTA.

The program is expected to survive even in an uncertain economy. Each project has committed workers. Without funding it is difficult to develop new projects. However, the planning committee can exist and continue its work as long as its members feel the job is worth doing.

The Fairfield AGES Program has been recognized by the Connecticut State Department of Education as an exemplary program. It was awarded the Famaghetti Award for Excellence in Gerontological Education at the 1990 Northeastern Gerontological Society annual meeting. AGES concepts are being used by groups in other communities as school systems develop more linkages with older adults.

The Fairfield **AGES** Program goal is to maximize exchange between older adults and all components of the Fairfield Public School System. Guided by a Planning Committee, the Fairfield **AGES** Program promotes projects in the following focus areas:

- *Intergenerational Exchange*
- *Currricular Activities*
- *Classroom Activities*
- *Curriculum on Aging*
- *Staff Development*
- *Extracurricular Activities*
- *Older Adult Programming*

Specific Projects in the Fairfield **AGES** Program include:

**PTA Outreach for Classroom Volunteers**
**Intergenerational Pen Pals**
**Adopt a Nursing Home**
**Room Grandparents**
**Cultural Outreach (concerts, performances)**
**High School Initiative**
**Summer Seminars for Seniors**
**Support for Retired Teachers' Group**
**Curriculum and Project Development**
**In-service Training**

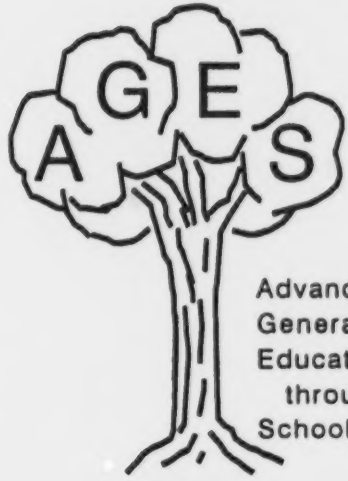


affix postage here

The Fairfield **AGES** Program
c/o Mr. Len Bennett, **AGES** Planning Committee Chair
Fairfield Public Schools Education Center
760 Stillson Road
Fairfield, CT 06430



# Volunteer Information




# The Fairfield AGES Program

A partnership between the Fairfield Public School system and the Center for the Study of Aging, University of Bridgeport. This program is funded by the Fairfield Public School System, the Town of Fairfield, the Fairfield County Cooperative Foundation and Physicians Health Services and is supported by the Fairfield PTA Council.

The Fairfield **AGES** Program continually seeks older adults interested in learning and participating in **AGES** Projects. ***To become involved***, either return the attached mailer or call **Mr. Len Bennett at the Education Center, 760 Stillson Road, Fairfield, CT, 06601 255 - 8376.**

The following volunteer opportunities exist in the Fairfield Public Schools:

**Elementary Schools (grades k - 5, ages 5 - 11)**

*Help with computers*
*Clerical work in office*
*Library Assistant*
*Math assistance*
*Reading to a child (once or ongoing)*
*Sharing a skill*
*Teaching a skill*
*Pen Pal*
*Listening to student stories (grade 1)*
*Work with art teacher*
*Assist in Writing as a Process Program*
*Sell lunch tickets*
*Help children with small motor, auditory difficulties*
*Guest speaker*
*Cooking*
*Sand play with Special Education students*
*Yearbook Organizer*
*Story telling*
*Math and reading games*
*Small craft projects*



**Middle Schools (grades 6 - 8, ages 12 - 14)**

*Math helpers*
*Library helpers*
*Play piano for chorus*
*Help students set up a small business*
*Tutoring*
*Retired Professionals sharing skills in: Math, writing, music, reading, poetry, history, social studies*
*Art activities and displays*
*Autobiography writing*
*Sharing your ethnic background, career, personal history, or travels*

**High School (grades 9 - 12, ages 15 - 18)**

**Guest speakers on:** *Careers, Spanish culture & food, Engineering, Life years ago, Africa, France, Russia, India, Astronomy, Physics, Fine Arts, Life as an older adult, Asia, Latin America, China, Preservation of nature*

**Tutors in:** *Math, Spanish, English as a second language, Basic math, Basic reading*

**Assistance in:** *Science and math laboratories, Art or craft projects, Reading poetry to a class, Reading compositions, Bookkeeping, Auto shop, Woodworking, Being a model for art class*

***Please detach and return to the address on the opposite side.***

***I want to become involved in the Fairfield AGEs Program.***

***Name:*** _____

***Address:*** _____

_____

_____

_____

***Telephone:*** _____

***Times, days of week, particular months I am available:***

_____

_____

***Please list any of the opportunities in which you are interested. Also, if you have an additional area in which you would like to help, please fill it in as well.***

_____

_____

_____

## APPENDIX B
## A School-Based AGES Program

The following is a brief description of how the AGES model was developed at a single school in West Hartford, Connecticut. It illustrates what can be done at individual schools without any additional financial resources and with minimal time commitments from those involved.

Developing a systemwide AGES program may be difficult in some school districts. In some cases, the collective energy of school personnel may be consumed by internal or external pressures, such as changes in administrative personnel or overcoming school budget opposition. The political climate may make it difficult to coordinate efforts throughout the district. Individuals may not be in a position to initiate an AGES program on a large scale, but might develop a single-school program. In such cases, principals may be able to launch successful AGES programs for their buildings.

Charter Oak, a West Hartford elementary school, was chosen to pilot a school-based AGES program for the 1990-91 school year. The principal emphasized community involvement and the teaching staff had a reputation for supporting new efforts which improved the overall school atmosphere. Two older volunteers already were working with students in various capacities on a regular basis.

After the Charter Oak principal gained the initial endorsement of her staff, an AGES planning committee was established. The committee consisted of four teachers, two town senior center directors, the president of the local AARP chapter, the recreation director at the closest nursing home, the coordinator of town senior services and a current senior volunteer. Prior to the meeting, members received a description of the purpose of the program and examples of AGES projects.

At the initial planning meeting, members identified projects that would serve the needs of their respective groups. For example, persons representing organizations serving older residents identified ways the school might help. An informal network emerged, in which the school identified responsible young students who lived near home-bound persons needing simple tasks done around their homes.

After many ideas were proposed, planning committee members identified those on which they wished to concentrate. First-year projects included the following.

**Travel and geography.** Older adults shared their travel experiences as part of a long-term social studies unit. Students "traveled" around the world, stopping in countries of particular interest to them. When they made their "stops," community residents who had visited foreign countries brought in memorabilia and pictures.

**Library media center.** Older adult volunteers assisted the librarian with filing and organizing media center materials. One person regularly spent one and sometimes two full days every week working in the library.

**Computer training.** The librarian offered to train older adults on computers. Two older adults then assisted students with computer writing exercises and educational games. Some typed finished writing products for students in the primary grades.

**Oral histories.** As part of a social studies unit, older adults were invited to share their memories of growing up and working in the community. Teachers then worked to develop ways to incorporate short homework assignments for students to interview older family members or neighbors.

**Reading partnership.** Students read to older volunteers and the volunteers then read to young students. Five older persons worked regularly with both small groups and individual students.

**Mentors.** Older adults were invited to share special talents with students. While this project was not developed during the first year, the school sought to identify residents with different work and hobby experiences to assist students with similar interests.

**Family resource center.** During the second year of AGES, Charter Oak School used two older adults as part of a newly established Family Resource Center. The volunteers had previous experience in

nursing and social work and assisted the resource coordinator in health care promotion with parents of children (from birth to age 3) in the school district. This volunteer project was developed from the initiative of the older adults who expressed interest in working with the center.

A volunteer recruitment brochure was sent home with all students and given to senior center directors for distribution. While the brochure (see pages 21 and 22) was useful in publicizing program goals, most of the support came from personal contacts and endorsements.

During the first year, the school had about 20 older adults assisting in various projects. Some participated on a weekly basis, others on temporary projects. The school then worked to build upon existing project ideas, concentrating on maintaining current volunteers and recruiting new ones. In order to maintain enthusiasm, the school adjusted projects to accommodate the interests, skills and availability of individuals. One successful recruitment strategy is the "each one bring one" concept, where volunteers bring a friend for a day and work together with students. Distributing an AGES brochure annually through local senior organizations will help visibility of the program within the community.

Support from the principal and staff members allowed the Charter Oak AGES program to develop in spite of the lack of additional funds. The numerous benefits for students, teachers and older residents clearly outweigh the minimal time commitments needed to promote the program.

To:

Ms. Norma Fisher
CHARTER OAK SCHOOL
30 Parker Street
West Hartford, CT 06110

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# A G E S Program

The goal of the Charter Oak AGES Program is to maximize exchange between older adults and young students.

The projects in the Charter Oak AGES Program represent a growth in commitment to involve all generations in the school. Through this program, we hope to strengthen education, families, our neighborhood and the community.

The Charter Oak AGES Program is guided by a planning committee consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, senior centers directors, local nursing home staff, and town Human Service Department director.

We encourage your comments and suggestions.

Charter Oak School
A G E S Program
Advancing Generations Education through Schools
Bringing Older Adults and Students Together
30 PARKER ST., WEST HARTFORD, CONN. 06110

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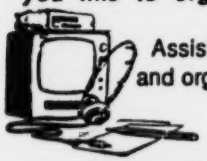
## Travel and Geography

***Do you have pictures or memorbilia from your travels to other countries? Or are you from another country?***

Share your stories about other lands, customs, and people with our students who are "traveling around the world" in their classes.

## Library Media Center

***Are you a library advocate and do you like to organize things?***



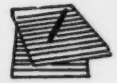
Assist our librarian with filing and organizing our media center.

## Computer Assistance

***Do you know how to use a computer or would you like to learn?***

We will train you on our Apple computers if you would like to help young students on computer writing and learning games. (No previous computer skills are necessary.)

## Oral Histories



***Have you watched West Hartford grow over the years?***

Share your memories of places and events. Our students would like to know what it was like growing up, working, and raising families in West Hartford.

## Reading Partnership

***Do you enjoy reading and reading to others?***

Our students love to be read to and would like to read to you.

## Mentors

***Do you have special interests, talents, or hobbies such as music, art, woodworking, gardening, or stamp-collecting?***

Team up with young students who have the same interest or talent that they would like to develop.

---

The Charter Oak **AGES** Program continually seeks older adults interested in learning and participating in **AGES** Projects. **To become involved:**

Mail the attached form to:
Charter Oak School
30 Parker St.
West Hartford, CT 06110

Or give to:
Gina Cristalli, Elmwood Center
or
Ned Skinnon, W.H. Senior Center

For additional information call: Norma Fisher at Charter Oak, 233-8506



**I want to participate in the Charter Oak AGES Program.**

**Name** _____

**Address** _____

_____

**Telephone** _____

**Time, day of week, or particular month I am available:**

_____

_____

**The grade level(s) I prefer:**

__ K __ 1 __ 2

__ 3 __ 4 __ 5

__ any grade

**Check any of the activities in which you are interested. If you have other areas in which you would like to participate, please fill in as well.**

__ Travel/Geography __ Oral Histories

__ Library Media __ Reading Partners

__ Computer __ Mentors

_____

_____

_____

# APPENDIX C
## Professional Development Suggestions

Most educators have no formal training on gerontological topics such as the aging process and eldercare. Administrators can better promote AGES concepts if their staff members share a common background and are familiar with some of the contemporary issues they and their students face.

Although some educators are not immediately drawn to courses related to aging education, they generally appreciate the exposure to this new field of study. Some people initially think that there cannot be much more than common sense information to know about aging. For others, avoiding gerontological information reflects a general negative attitude about aging and may be an avoidance reaction to personal aging. However, experience shows that once teachers are introduced to the topic, they sincerely appreciate practical information which touches their personal lives as well as the lives of their students.

Comments from Connecticut educators who have participated in aging education courses and completed evaluation forms suggest the professional and personal growth that is possible:

- "This has been a real eye opener for me. It will be easily adapted to my classroom and the school curriculum."
- "This information should be offered more often and to a wider audience, such as administrators."
- "It was great to walk into this classroom knowing very little and coming out actually dispelling myths, being more knowledgeable and more positive than ever about older Americans and the intergenerational process. I cannot wait to share the materials and wealth of knowledge with my colleagues."

Professional development staff members should look for presenters who not only are knowledgeable in gerontology, but who also understand young people and how schools function. The overall tone and message should be positive rather than problem focused. Five topics with suggested objectives, readings and films that are useful for in-service training for educators follow.

### Attitudes About Aging

**Sample Learning Objectives**

- Understand different meanings of age (chronological, legal, personal, physiological, psychological and social).
- Compare ageism with sexism and racism.
- Understand the diversity within different old-age groups (young-old, old-old, oldest-old).
- Appreciate the diversity of the aging experiences.
- Increase awareness of societal attitudes as expressed in media.
- Consider how attitudes about time and age change as we age.
- Examine children's attitudes about aging.
- Examine educational models intended to change attitudes.

**Selected References**

Palmore, Erdman B. *Ageism: Negative and Positive*. New York: Springer Publishing, 1990.

Russell, Charles H. *Good News about Aging*. New York: John Wiley, 1989.

**Film**

*Old Like Me* (28 minutes), Filmakers Library, Inc., 124 East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016, (212) 808-4980.

## Aging Process

### Sample Learning Objectives

- Examine myths and facts about aging.
- Identify physiological and sensory changes associated with aging.
- Understand the value of lifelong healthy habits.
- Compare changes that occur in later life with those that occur at other ages.
- Explore beliefs and theories about successful aging.
- Discuss how veteran teachers fare in schools today.

### Selected References

Porcino, Jane. *Growing Older, Getting Better: A Handbook for Women in the Second Half of Life*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1983.

Doress, Paula Brown, and Siegal, Diana Laskin. *Ourselves, Growing Older*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.

### Films

*The Mind: Aging* (59 Minutes), PBS Elementary/ Secondary Service, 1320 Braddock Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314, (703) 739-5038.

*I Never Planned on This* (46 Minutes), Filmakers Library, Inc., 124 East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016, (212) 808-4980.

## Generational Interdependence

### Sample Learning Objectives

- Understand demographic changes affecting the dynamics among generations.
- Appreciate the dramatic effects of an aging society on political, economic, social and educational institutions.
- Identify major arguments within the generational equity debate.
- Explain common issues, e.g., health care, that all generations face.

### Selected References

Dychtwald, Ken, and Flower, Joe. *Age Wave*. New York: Bantam, 1990.

Kingson, Eric R.; Hirshorn, Barbara A.; and Cornman, John M. *Ties That Bind: The Interdependence of Generations*. Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press, 1986.

Pifer, Allen, and Bronte, Lydia, editors. *Our Aging Society: Paradox and Promise*. New York: Norton, 1986.

## Intergenerational Education

### Sample Learning Objectives

- Understand common mistakes made in designing intergenerational programs.
- Identify a variety of intergenerational models, e.g., senior mentors, latchkey programs, senior outreach, oral history, senior students.
- Experience an intergenerational group discussion.
- Understand that all cultures do not have the same view toward aging.
- Identify ways in which intergenerational approaches can facilitate curricular goals.
- Identify ways to access the community aging network and to recruit qualified older adults for school programs.

### Selected References


Newman, Sally, and Brummel, Steven W., editors. *Intergenerational Programs: Imperatives, Strategies, Impacts, Trends.* Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 1989.

Close Up Foundation. *Building Bridges to Citizenship.* Arlington, VA: Close Up Foundation, 1989.

Thorp, Kathlyn. *Intergenerational Programs: A Resource for Community Renewal.* Madison, WI: Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, Inc., 1985.


### Films

*One to One* (24 minutes), Terra Nova Films, Inc., 9849 S. Winchester Avenue, Chicago, IL 60643, (312) 881-8491.

*Best of You . . . Best of Me* (27 minutes), Generations Together, Suite 300, 121 University Place, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

## Aging and Our Families

### Sample Learning Objectives

- Examine multigenerational family issues and their possible effects on young people.
- Understand the interconnectedness of family members and the complexity of family dynamics.
- Identify common feelings and concerns of families who provide eldercare.
- Recognize effective communication patterns in multigenerational families.
- Understand different forms of elder abuse.
- Discuss the perceived boundaries between schools and families in dealing with family changes.

### Selected References


Couper, Donna P. *Aging and Our Families: Handbook for Family Caregivers*, vol. 1; *Leader's Guide to Caregiver Program*, vol. 2. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1989.

Edinberg, Mark. *Talking with Your Aging Parents.* Boston: Shambhala, 1987.

Horne, Janet. *Caregiving: Helping an Aged Loved One.* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1985.

Silverstone, Barbara, and Hyman, Helen. *You and Your Aging Parents: The Modern Family's Guide to Emotional, Physical, and Financial Problems.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.


### Film

*My Mother, My Father* (33 minutes), Terra Nova Films, Inc., 9849 S. Winchester Avenue, Chicago, IL 60643, (312) 881-8491.

## APPENDIX D
## The Aging Network

### National Organizations

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
601 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20049
(202) 434-6070

American Society on Aging (ASA)
833 Market Street, Suite 516
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 543-2617

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA)
1275 K Street, NW, Suite 350
Washington, DC 20005-4006
(202) 842-1275

Retired Senior Volunteers Program (RSVP)
ACTION
806 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525
1-800-424-2284

The National Council on the Aging (NCOA)
600 Maryland Avenue, SW
West Wing 100
Washington, DC 20024
(203) 479-1200

### Intergenerational Program Resources

*Exchange* Newsletter
Generations Together
Suite 300; 121 University Place
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
(412) 648-7150

*Directory of Intergenerational Programming*
Center on Rural Elderly
University of Missouri at Kansas City
5245 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, MO 64110
(816) 235-2180

*Interages News*
Montgomery County Intergenerational Resource Center
9411 Connecticut Avenue
Kensington, MD 20895
(301) 949-3551

*Interchange*
Center for Intergenerational Learning
Institute on Aging
Temple University
1601 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122
(215) 787-6970

*Intergenerational Clearinghouse* Newsletter
RSVP of Dane County Inc.
517 N. Segoe Road, Suite 210
Madison, WI 53705
(608) 238-7787

Lifespan Resources, Inc.
1212 Roosevelt
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(313) 994-4715

*Linkages*
Center for Understanding Aging
Framingham State College
Framingham, MA 01701
(505) 626-4979

*Newsline* Newsletter
Generations United
440 First Street NW, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20001-2001
(202) 638-2952

### Connecticut State Organizations

Connecticut State Department on Aging
175 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06106
1-800-443-9946

Alzheimer's Coalition of Connecticut, Inc.
175 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06106
566-7772

**Area Agencies on Aging**

Southwestern Area Agency on Aging
2414 Main Street
Bridgeport, CT 06606
333-9288

North Central Area Agency on Aging
999 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
278-2044

Eastern Connecticut Area Agency on Aging
401 West Thames Street
Norwich, CT 06360
887-3561

Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging
20 East Main Street
Waterbury, CT 06702
757-5449

South Central Area Agency on Aging
201 Noble Street
West Haven, CT 06516
933-5431

**Connecticut Retired Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP)**

RSVP of Northern New London County
90 Town Street
Norwich, CT 06360
889-2648

RSVP of Southern New London County
302 Captain's Walk
New London, CT 06320
422-8396

Greater Norwalk RSVP
98 South Main Street
Norwalk, CT 06854
854-1880

RSVP of Eastern Fairfield County
263 Golden Hill Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604
576-8048

New Britain Area RSVP
50 High Street
New Britain, CT 06051
224-7117

RSVP of North Fairfield County
2 Terrace Place
Danbury, CT 06810
792-8200

Greater Bristol RSVP
98 Summer Street
Bristol, CT 06010
584-2725

Greater Hartford RSVP
99 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105
274-4293

RSVP of Waterbury
232 North Elm Street
Waterbury, CT 06702
575-9799

RSVP of Greater New Haven
201 Noble Street
West Haven, CT 06516
933-5431

United Services RSVP
Wolf Den Road
Post Office Box 168
Brooklyn, CT 06234
774-9486

Midstate RSVP
97 Broad Street
Middletown, CT 06457
347-0236

# EPILOGUE
## Why Teach About Aging?

**By FRAN PRATT, DIRECTOR**
**Center For Understanding Aging**
**Framingham (MA) State College**

Children learn about aging whether we teach them or not. The issue is not whether they learn, but rather what they learn about the lifelong process of growing up and growing older. If left to happenstance, children learn about aging in the same ways they learn about so many things – simply by absorbing whatever they hear or see, often without being able to distinguish between fact and fiction. We might call this learning by osmosis. All too often, what children learn about aging by osmosis is based on myths about the aging process and on stereotypes of older people that are deeply entrenched in our culture. These myths and stereotypes are transmitted from one generation to another in our language, humor and literature, and through all the media by which we perpetuate the knowledge, values and attitudes of our society.

Not everything that children learn about aging is negative. As with adults from whom they learn, children's attitudes about aging are complex and ambivalent, reflecting the mixed feelings of society as a whole. Yet research shows that, even at a very early age, children may already have internalized ideas that can serve as a breeding ground for ageism (age prejudice) and gerontophobia (fear of aging).

Similarly, not everything children learn about the process of aging is false. Yet, again, research demonstrates that what children know about the process of growing up and growing older is a mixture of truth and misinformation. Like many adults from whom they learn, their perspective on life in the later years (and of their own future as people who will someday grow old) is often dominated by a view of aging as a process of decline, rather than one of growth and fulfillment. A child's view of what it means to grow old frequently emphasizes physical and mental handicaps, loneliness and isolation, institutionalization and dependency. What is missing is the vision of life at all ages as characterized by wellness of body and mind, involvement with others, and independent lives connected to the community at large. In other words, children fully understand the problems that often accompany old age. What they do not understand is the great potential for happiness and wellness throughout long life when people exercise good habits of mental and physical health, and when they live in a society that provides opportunities for them in later years to remain active participants in the mainstream of life.

Children today are expected to live longer than any previous generation and, barring unforeseen circumstances, to live out their long lives in a progressively aging society. Since the beginning of the century, average life expectancy at birth has steadily climbed from 47 to 74 years, which means that half the children born in the 1980s should live to their mid-70s, even if no new breakthroughs in medical technology and health care develop to extend their lives further.

When today's elementary school children become tomorrow's senior citizens, they will be among those one out of four Americans who already have passed their 60th birthday. This "longevity revolution" of the 20th century brings vast implications for all aspects of life. Greater longevity and changes in the age composition of the population have had, and will continue to have, an enormous impact on the family, careers and retirement, education, medicine, business, government and the distribution of public resources. All living Americans, and especially the young, will live out the rest of their

lives facing new challenges on age-related issues that will require intelligent decisions based on knowledge and comprehension, not on myth and misinformation.

For all these reasons, children need to learn about aging. It is better to prevent than to cure, easier to learn than "un-learn." Children should begin at the earliest possible age to develop a healthy and realistic view of aging, to understand that they can maximize their own opportunities for quality of life, and to develop understanding of the complex issues of living in an aging world. None of us, and least of all young people, can afford to face our individual or collective future(s) guided by ageist myths and stereotypes or by patterns of age discrimination and gerontophobic behavior. If preparation for the future was ever a goal of education, then education about aging should clearly be a high priority for all who play a role in educating and socializing the young.

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